



WESTOVER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Policy

Prepared By	Westover Primary School EYFS Leader
Approved By	Westover Primary School Governing Body
Approval Date	December 2025
Policy Review Date	December 2028
Signature	
Name	

Philosophy

We believe that The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children in all seven areas of the curriculum and through the identified characteristics of learning. Children should be given opportunities to be active learners to achieve their full potential, regardless of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability. We believe that a balance of child-initiated learning through play and objective led adult initiated activities based on the children's next steps provide the best opportunities to extend children's thinking.

We value every child as an individual and work alongside parents / carers and others (professionals) to meet the child's need and help them reach their full potential.

For other specific policies relating to our Pre-School please refer to our website and click on the 'Pre-School' tab. [Home - Westover Primary School](#)

Main school policies can also be found on our website using link above and clicking the 'About us' tab then selecting policies.

Context

Here at Westover, we are a one form entry school. We are a warm, welcoming and spacious school. We are proud to have a teacher led Pre-school which open in September 2024. The pre-school is open from 8.30-3 Monday to Friday, term time only. We welcome children to join us from the age of 3.

Children who apply and are allocated a place at Westover Primary will join our reception class. Our school day starts at 8.30 and finishes at 3.10. We have a large classroom with an attached outdoor classroom. The large space boasts and covered area which is perfect for the wetter months. Pre-school and reception share the outside space allowing children to learn collaboratively.

Aims

We aim to provide a curriculum and environment which:

- Is based on “The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)” statutory document [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK](#)
- Provides practical and meaningful experiences, developing independence, confidence and initiative
- Fosters the characteristics of learning – playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically to support strong lifelong learning behaviours.
- Encourages children to become aware of the needs of others developing respect for people and property
- Builds on what children already know and can do
- Allows each child to build on firm learning experiences which provide a foundation for the National Curriculum
- Is welcoming, calm and attractive to children, parents, staff and visitors
- Gives access to a stimulating outside classroom equipped to allow and encourage the children to develop in all areas of the curriculum in an open environment

The Curriculum

The EYFS Framework is statutory, with 4 overarching principles

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- **Importance of learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The seven areas of learning that form the basis of “The Early Years Foundation Stage” document will be used when planning the curriculum. There are 3 prime areas of learning and 4 specific.

The curriculum is centred on three Prime Areas of Learning:

1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific Areas of Learning include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

These areas of learning and development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others. All areas of learning and development are closely interlinked. As effective Early Years practitioners, we plan a broad and balanced range of activities based on the needs of the children in our setting. We plan a yearly progression of knowledge and skills which provides opportunities for children to retrieve and recall previously taught knowledge and skills. We deliver these skills through a coherent and sequentially designed curriculum based on the children's needs and interests.

When planning and facilitating these activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn and support children in using the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These are;

Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things and are willing to 'have a go'

Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties; they enjoy achievements

Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things

The Early Years Foundation stage guidance identifies “Early Years Outcomes” which will be used to identify developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children need if they are to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. These goals establish the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage.

Planning

Teaching and learning will be organised through the use of long, medium and short term plans. Both Pre-school and reception follow a different topic for each half term. These include children’s interest and opportunities to introduce our children to new concepts and ideas. The texts in the classroom are closely linked to these topics ensuring children are exposed to a wide range of authors. Children will also find books that staff have chosen specifically based on the children’s interests. The activities and environment are carefully planned for which will ignite the children imaginations and foster a love of learning . Short term plans will include opportunities that build on and extend children’s current knowledge, experiences, interests and skills.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching will include the following strategies:

- Working in partnership with parents, as parents continue to have a prime teaching role with their children
- Promoting children’s learning in all 7 areas of the curriculum through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable
- Adults who model a range of positive behaviour
- Effective interaction which will develop children communication, problem solving and reasoning skills. Here at Westover we follow the ShREC approach. We **share**

attention, respond and follow the child's lead, expand on their thinking and share an enhanced back and forth conversations.

- Providing a balance between teacher directed activities and child-initiated learning
- Interacting with and supporting children in a way that positively affects the attitudes to learning that children develop, using language and vocabulary that is rich and using correct grammar Acknowledging that children learn in different ways
- Children teaching and encouraging each other
- By practitioners working and planning as a team
- By valuing a play-based curriculum. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language

Effective learning will evolve by

- Children feeling safe, secure and able to trust the practitioners who work with them
- Children learning to respect themselves and others
- Respecting children's culture so that they can develop a positive self- image
- Children learning about relationships
- Children learning about the importance of friendship
- Children developing a positive disposition to learning
- Children having opportunities for problem solving
- Children engaging in active learning – some notes on the Power of Play???

SEND

With support from the school's SENDCo, practitioners will plan for children with special educational needs and identify other children with learning needs including the gifted and talented. The focus will be on removing barriers for children where they already exist, ensuring that children can develop their full potential. If a child with identified SEND enters Early Years, a transition plan will be set up before the child starts, as detailed in the SEND policy.

Assessment

Assessment will be ongoing throughout the EYFS using mainly observations of the children. Children are assessed against the Development Matters. [Development Matters -](#)

[Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage](#) Observations will form part of the child's learning journey alongside individual assessments. Pre school teachers will observe and form a baseline assessment within the first 6 weeks of every child starting. This baseline will be updated every half term to establish areas to develop. These will then become a priority within the short-term plans.

Within reception the children will also have a 'baseline assessment' during their first half term. In addition to establishing our own school baseline assessment, staff will also administer the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). All assessments are used to identify next steps and inform planning. Gaps in learning are identified and made a priority, by adapting planning and if appropriate delivering interventions.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development ('expected')
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. In addition, teachers moderate with Year 1 teachers to support a smooth transition into Year 1. Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile, each child's annual report (which includes a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning). This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Partnership with Parents

We strongly believe that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and when parents and practitioners work together, the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning. A successful partnership needs a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We will work to develop an effective partnership with parents through:

- Practitioners showing respect and understanding for the role of the parent in their child's education
- Recognising and encouraging the past and future played by parents in the education of their children
- Parents supporting transition to school meetings and paperwork
- Inviting all parents to pupil consultation evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms to share their progress and inviting parents into school 4 times a year to celebrate their child's learning that term. These are called exit points.
- Listening to parents' accounts of their child's development and any concerns they have
- Making sure that arrangements for settling in are flexible enough to give time for children to become secure
- All parents being made to feel welcome, valued and necessary through a range of different opportunities for collaboration between child's parents and practitioners, such as home visits, settling in sessions and WOW moments. A WOW moment is a way of sharing something that has happened at home that you are proud of.
- Practitioners using a variety of ways to keep parents fully informed about the curriculum, such as newsletters, weekly blogs and parent information workshops as well as being available at the end of each day to answer any queries.
- Relevant learning and play activities, such as reading and sharing books are continued at home. Similarly experiences at home are used to develop learning at school, for example sharing news about visits and celebrations.

No child shall be excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability, as detailed in the equality policy.

Admissions & Induction (Please also see separate admissions policies)

Pre-school.

Children who are three years old and have applied to attend the Pre-school will be invited to two stay and play sessions before they start. These sessions will last an hour.

One of session will be with the parent/s. Depending on availability, you will be able to choose the sessions that you require. You can also join the waiting list for a preferred session. We will contact you when these sessions become available.

Reception.

Children are admitted into the reception class in the year they turn 5 years old. An information evening for new parents is held in June. A presentation is given by the Headteacher and Early Years team about the Foundation Stage. School information packs are distributed to parents either before or at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations. There is also time for parents to look around the Foundation Base and ask any questions. In July we invite your child to two stay and play sessions. One with the parent, one without. This allows the parents time to talk to the class teacher and TA (Teaching Assistant) whilst your child explores the environment. These stay and play sessions are no longer than 1 hour. Home visits are offered to all our families and carried out during the first week of school in September. The purpose of a home visit is to get to know your family. This is the perfect time to ask any question or share any information you feel that we should know. On the second week of September, children start with a shorter day. 8:30-11.30. On the second day they will stay for lunch and will need to be collected at 1pm. On the third day the class will be full time. This means their school day will be from 8.30-3.10 daily.

Children start Reception on a full-time basis except in cases where a more gradual transition is deemed appropriate, and this is planned and co-ordinated by the school SENDCo and the EYFS leader in collaboration with the parents. EYFS leader will aim to visit the children in their pre-school settings during the summer term especially in those instances where the preschool has identified a need for extra support for transition.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety. We promote the good health of our children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of fruit snacks, drinking water being available at all times and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. [Westover-Health-Safety-Policy-Sept-24-25.pdf](#)

Staff and visitors are prohibited from using their mobile phones in our classrooms, only the class iPads are used to photograph children and children must be appropriately dressed in photographs.

Across the EYFS unit there is always a paediatric first aider available. For the rare instance a member of staff is absent then there is a step-by-step procedure in place.

The Child Protection Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Westover Primary School. Backing up this policy is a dedicated safeguarding team which includes 1 Designated Safeguarding Lead Joanne Dorricott and 3 deputy designated safeguarding leads; Tom Upfield, Rose Leslie and Hannah Dalton , All Staff have had training in how to log incidents and use the safeguarding system CPOMS to log any concerns regarding any aspects of safeguarding and behaviour. All staff are vigilant in reporting concerns. All staff are aware of and understood the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. They have read and understood responsibilities regarding part 1 of the document.

Evaluation and Review

Planning is monitored by the Headteacher and the EYFS Leader. The Foundation Stage Profile results are monitored by the Assessment Leader with the Headteacher and are discussed at pupil progress meetings and used to inform target setting and planning.

